Claims

1.   A system for streaming data comprising a content providing server capable of storing content and communicating the content to at least a first and a second recipient servers via a communications network, and a distribution server coupled in-line between the content providing server and the at least the first and second recipient servers, wherein the distribution server is arranged to generate at least a first and a second onward data streams and transmit the at least the first and second onward data streams to the at least the first and second recipient servers, respectively, in response to an incoming data stream received from the content providing server and corresponding to the content, wherein the at least the first and second onward data streams correspond substantially to the content and are offset in time with respect to each other by a respective offset value.

2.   A system as claimed in Claim 1, wherein the first and/or the second onward data streams are generated prior to receipt of all of the incoming data stream.

3.   A system as claimed in Claim 1, wherein the offset value is provided by the content providing server.

4.   A system as claimed in Claim 1, wherein the distribution server is arranged to loop the first onward data stream at least once.

5.   A multicast server for streaming data, comprising a processor unit coupled to a storage device and a router, the processor unit being arranged to receive an incoming data stream corresponding to content and storing the content in the storage device, wherein the processor unit is further arranged to generate at least a first and a second onward data streams for transmission to at least a first and a second recipient servers, respectively, in response to the incoming data stream, wherein the at least the first and second onward data streams correspond substantially to the content and are offset in time with respect to each other by a respective offset value.

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6. A multicast server as claimed in Claim 5, wherein the router is arranged to transmit the at least the first and the second onward data streams to the at least the first and the second recipient servers, respectively.

7. A multicast server as claimed in Claim 5, wherein the first and/or the second onward data streams are generated prior to receipt of all of the incoming data stream.

8. A multicast server as claimed in Claim 5, wherein the offset value is provided by a content providing server.

9. A multicast server as claimed in Claim 5, wherein the processor unit is arranged to loop the first onward data stream at least once.

10. A method of streaming data between a content providing server and at least a first and a second recipient servers, the method comprising the steps of:
    receiving an incoming data stream corresponding to content,
    generating at least a first and a second onward data streams;
    transmitting the at least the first and second onward data streams to the at least the first and second recipient servers, respectively, in response to the incoming data stream;
    wherein the at least the first and second onward data streams correspond substantially to the content and are offset in time with respect to each other by a respective offset value.

11. A method as claimed in Claim 11, further comprising generating the at least first and/or the second onward data streams prior to receipt of all of the incoming data stream.

12. A method as claimed in Claim 11, further comprising the content providing server providing the offset value.

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13. A method as claimed in Claim 11, further comprising the step of looping the first onward data stream at least once.

14. Computer executable software code stored on a computer readable medium, the code being for streaming data between a content providing server and at least a first and a second recipient servers, the code comprising:

code to receive an incoming data stream corresponding to content,

code to generate at least a first and a second onward data streams,

code to transmit the at least the first and second onward data streams to the at least the first and second recipient servers, respectively, in response to the incoming data stream;

wherein the at least the first and second onward data streams correspond substantially to the content and are offset in time with respect to each other by a respective offset value.

15. Computer executable software code as claimed in Claim 14, further comprising:

code to generate the at least first and/or the second onward data streams prior to receipt of all of the incoming data stream.

16. Computer executable software code as claimed in Claim 14, further comprising:

code to enable the content providing server to provide the offset value.

17. Computer executable software code as claimed in Claim 14, further comprising:

code to loop the first onward data stream at least once.

18. A programmed computer for streaming data between a content providing server and at least a first and a second recipient servers, comprising memory having at least one region for storing computer executable program code, and

a processor for executing the program code stored in memory, wherein the program code includes:

code to receive an incoming data stream corresponding to content,

code to generate at least a first and a second onward data streams;

code to transmit the at least the first and second onward data streams to the at least the first and second recipient servers, respectively, in response to the incoming data stream;

5   wherein the at least the first and second onward data streams correspond substantially to the content and are offset in time with respect to each other by a respective offset value.

19.   A programmed computer as claimed in Claim 18, wherein the program
10   code further comprises:

code to generate the at least first and/or the second onward data streams prior to receipt of all of the incoming data stream.

20.   A programmed computer as claimed in Claim 18, wherein the program
15   code further comprises:

code to enable the content providing server to provide the offset value.

21.   A programmed computer as claimed in Claim 18, wherein the program code further comprises:
20   code to loop the first onward data stream at least once.

22.   A computer readable medium having computer executable software code stored thereon, the code being for streaming data between a content providing server and at least a first and a second recipient servers and
25   comprising:

code to receive an incoming data stream corresponding to content,

code to generate at least a first and a second onward data streams;

code to transmit the at least the first and second onward data streams to the at least the first and second recipient servers, respectively, in response to
30   the incoming data stream;

wherein the at least the first and second onward data streams correspond substantially to the content and are offset in time with respect to each other by a respective offset value.

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23. A computer readable medium as claimed in Claim 22, further comprising:

code to generate the at least first and/or the second onward data streams prior to receipt of all of the incoming data stream.

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24. A computer readable medium as claimed in Claim 22, further comprising:

code to enable the content providing server to provide the offset value.

10 25. A computer readable medium as claimed in Claim 22, further comprising:

code to loop the first onward data stream at least once.